



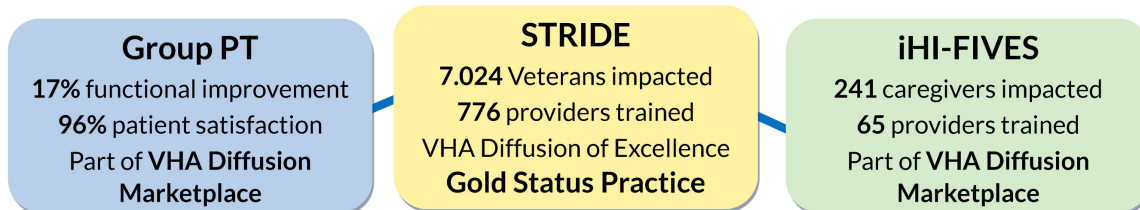
Function QUERI

Optimizing Function and Independence
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

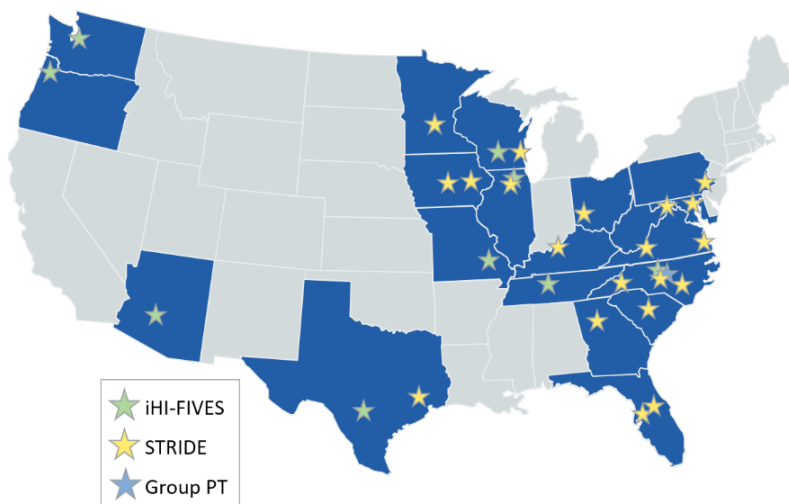
Key Impacts: 2016-2020

The first iteration of the Function QUERI grant came to a close in September 2020 and our team submitted our final report in November. Here are some key highlights of the work that was accomplished in four years. We look forward to the impacts we will see over the next few years with Function QUERI "2.0"!



From 2016-2020, Function QUERI:

- Partnered with 5 National VA Program Offices and VISN 6
- Developed evidence-based tools and strategies to promote expanded dissemination of Group Physical Therapy, STRIDE, and iHI-FIVES across 27 VA medical centers
- Trained more than 841 VA employees and served over 7,265 Veterans and caregivers.



IN THIS ISSUE:

Highlights from 2016-2020 final report

Remembering Liz Mahanna

Lights, Camera, Action! (Group PT)

STRIDE team responds to COVID-19 barriers

Caregivers FIRST hosts workshop & welcomes new clinical consultant

Remembering Liz Mahanna



September 30, 1966 - January 16, 2022

It is with great sorrow that our team informs you of the passing of our Project Coordinator, **Liz Mahanna**. Liz joined Durham VA as a Project Coordinator with the Health Services Research and Development (HSR&D) ADAPT Center of Innovation in 2014. During her time at ADAPT, Liz distinguished herself as an outstanding researcher, teacher, leader, and friend. Liz led multiple local and national VA research studies, and coordinated the implementation and evaluation of clinical programs in VAs across the country. She was passionate about serving Veterans and improving the healthcare they received at the VA. She especially loved qualitative interviews when she had the opportunity to hear directly from Veterans and health care providers and learn from their experience. Liz was incredibly generous with her experience and expertise, training many new research staff and providing opportunities for professional development through her leadership in Research Engagement Meetings. Liz inspired us all with her commitment to healthy living, demonstrated in basement workouts, stair climbing challenges, and incredible photos of her rock climbing adventures. Liz completed her undergraduate degree at Duke and earned her MPH at UNC in 2008. Prior to joining Durham VA, she served in multiple roles on research teams at the UNC Gillings School of Public Health and Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. Liz was a Veteran herself, serving in the U.S. Air Force from 1984-1989, earning recognition as Airman of the Year, 26th Aircraft Generation Squadron, Zweibrucken, Germany (1987) and an Air Force Achievement Medal (1989). Our thoughts are with Liz's friends and family; she will be greatly missed by many.



Lights, Camera, Action!

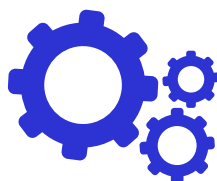


In November 2021, Group PT had the opportunity to partner with [Marshall Video](#) to shoot live footage of physical therapy exercises that will be used by Veterans with knee osteoarthritis (OA).

Veterans enrolled in the Group PT program will be encouraged to exercise twice a week outside of the regularly scheduled PT sessions. The videos will serve as additional instruction and guidance to help Veterans complete the exercises safely while at home.

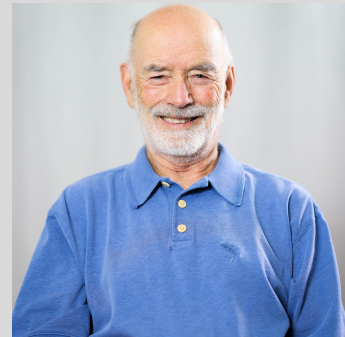
This opportunity would not have been possible without the support of the Durham Public Affairs team. Thank you for making this project come to life!

The Group PT team is excited to start enrolling interested sites and working with individuals to implement this program! If you are interested, please contact Caitlin Sullivan, Implementation Specialist, at Caitlin.Sullivan2@va.gov.



- Group PT is an **efficient model**.
- **Sites will receive tools** to support implementation.
- The program can be **adapted** to fit local needs.

Thank you to the
volunteers that
participated in
the video shoot!



Wally Guertin, US Air Force



Karee White, US Army



Cheryl Robinson, US Navy



Brian Sweeney, US Marine Corp

Walking All Over COVID-19: The Rapid Development of STRIDE in Your Room

Among older adults, prolonged time in bed during hospitalization can lead to deconditioning and functional impairments, and the COVID-19 pandemic made the STRIDE's in-person walking intervention challenging due to social distancing and infection control concerns. In response, the STRIDE team applied principles of implementation science (e.g., stakeholder engagement, rapid dissemination and feedback), to create STRIDE in Your Room (SiYR).

The SiYR program provided safe alternative activities when face-to-face walking was not available during the pandemic. Kits included self-guided exercises and light exercise equipment (e.g., TheraBands, stress ball, foam blocks, pedometer).

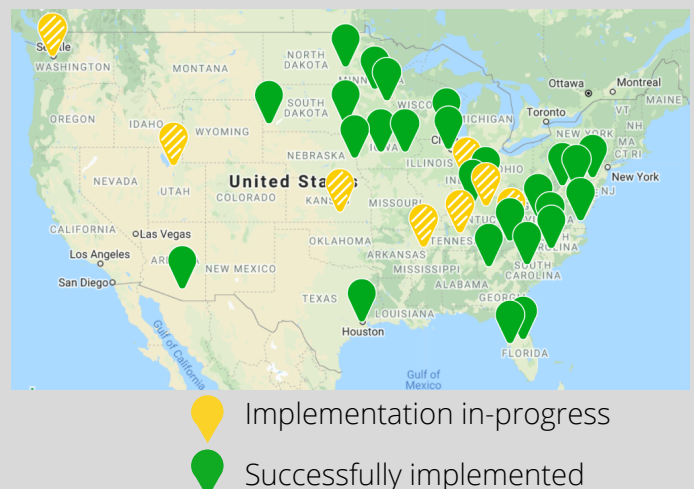


A [newly published paper](#) describes how our team developed SiYR to enhance a hospital mobility program, of which the STRIDE Diffusion Network was key in that collaboration.

STRIDE Continues Expansion

The Function QUERI 2.0 team continues active enrollment of VA facilities interested in launching a STRIDE program in acute care. Function QUERI 2.0 has enrolled 11 facilities since June 2021, including facilities from VISNs that mandated STRIDE in all its facilities. **VISN 23** has partnered with Function QUERI to fulfill a VISN-wide Strategic Initiative prioritizing inpatient mobility and **VISN 9** has mandated STRIDE as a priority for FY22. The Durham STRIDE team continues to work closely with **Diffusion of Excellence, Safe Patient Handling & Mobility**, and the **Office of Nursing Services** to ensure STRIDE programming aligns with other VA priorities and that facilities have a breadth of national-level implementation support.

We will launch the next cohort of sites implementing STRIDE programs with Function QUERI around the beginning of February 2022. Joining is easy: simply submit a participation agreement signed by a local point of contact and the facility's medical center director. Please reach out to Cassie Meyer at STRIDE@va.gov with questions or to request an informational call.



Caregivers FIRST Conducts Workshop

To promote the national announcement of Caregivers FIRST as a minimum standard with the Caregivers Support Program (CSP), the team hosted two workshops on October 27th and November 3rd, 2021 with CSP program managers and VISN leads.



A total of 61 CSP staff and 5 VISN leads attended the workshops. Twenty nine participants filled out a workshop evaluation (44% response rate). Of those who submitted an evaluation, 86% reported their site had implemented Caregivers FIRST.

- 82.7% felt the workshop improved their knowledge of Caregivers FIRST as a minimum standard.
- 89.6% felt confident they can help direct staff towards the resources they need to deliver Caregivers FIRST.

The workshop was recorded and posted for field staff on our [SharePoint](#) page.

Welcome Stephanie Spann!

The Function QUERI Caregivers FIRST team recently welcomed Stephanie Spann, Ph.D. abd., LCSW as a clinical consultant.

Stephanie is the Caregiver Support Program lead for VISN 6, which includes the Durham VA along with the following medical centers in North Carolina and Virginia: Asheville, Fayetteville, Hampton, Richmond, Salem, and Salisbury.

As a clinical consultant, Stephanie will assist the Caregivers FIRST team in reviewing our optional topic curriculum for caregivers to ensure topics are relevant and up-to-date as well as provide recommendations for improving inclusivity and cultural sensitivity across all of our of training materials.



Function QUERI "On the Road"

Function QUERI shared our best practices and key lessons learned at the 2021 AcademyHealth Dissemination and Implementation Conference in December.

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INTERESTED IN ENROLLING ?

- **STRIDE** - inpatient supervised walking program
 - Enrolling for Winter and Spring 2022
 - Contact STRIDE@va.gov
- **Caregivers FIRST** - caregiver skills training program
 - Will begin enrolling Spring 2022
 - Contact CaregiversFIRST@va.gov
- **Group PT** - group physical therapy program
 - Enrolling NOW!
 - Contact Caitlin.Sullivan2@va.gov

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS?

- STRIDE: <https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/the-stride-program>
- Caregivers FIRST: <https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/caregivers-first>
- Group PT: <https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/group-physical-therapy-for-knee-oa>

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